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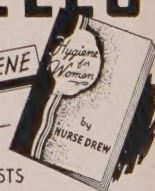
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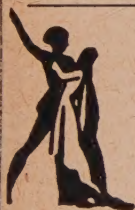
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THEATRE WORLD



John Vickers

Clive Brook

who makes his return to the stage after a 20 years' absence, in Daphne du Maurier's new play, *The Return of the Soldier*, which is at present on a short tour of the provinces. The play will soon be seen in the West End.



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Edited by Frances Stephens

January, 1945

Over the Footlights

1944 was a year of which the West End theatres might well be proud. It contained the biggest testing time for London when the enemy launched the vicious flying bomb attack, and we shall not forget the few shows that bravely withstood the onslaught and remained open throughout. We must admire, too, the courage of those who went ahead with their plans for new shows, not knowing whether it would be possible to produce when the moment came. Yet in spite of all, the year saw probably the biggest theatre boom of the war, and came to a close with more Christmas shows for the young of all ages than ever before.

For other reasons we can be proud of 1944 in the theatre. There has been no lowering of standards. On the contrary there have been unique achievements; witness the inauguration of West End repertory at the New and Haymarket theatres. We have seen two productions of *Hamlet* during the year, Tyrone Guthrie's with Robert Helpmann as the Prince, which caused much interest, and the current John Gielgud production at the Haymarket, which has further established that fine actor as the leading figure in the English theatre. The Old Vic production of *Richard III*, with Laurence Olivier superb in the title rôle, one might almost call epoch making, as is Ralph Richardson's *Peer Gynt*. The year has also probably seen the finest psychological thriller of all time in *Uncle Harry*, in which another of our younger actors, Michael Redgrave, gives one of the best pieces of acting in the West End.

There has been the success of Robert Donat's new management at the Westminster Theatre, where Wilde and Bridie have become established favourites. A number of successful revivals like Coward's *Private Lives* and *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*, all produced with astonishing lavishness, have been presented.

And the work has gone on quietly at the Arts Theatre, who by taking over the St. Martin's have already given a wider public the opportunity of seeing two such delightful plays as *Bird in Hand* and *The Magistrate*.

Of new plays, *The Banbury Nose* was a serious effort which deserved perhaps a longer run, while *Tomorrow the World* and *No Medals* were two plays with the war angle that merit their undoubted success.

AS far as this office has been concerned 1944 saw a surprising increase in correspondence from all parts of the earth. We have received letters from theatre-lovers as far afield as Chungking; Darwin, in N. Australia; South Africa; India and Ceylon and innumerable messages from the European fighting fronts. To all these faithful readers we send our thanks and best wishes for 1945, with the hope that they will be able to enjoy a West End show in person before the year is very old. Some of the letters have been so interesting that extracts have been published on several occasions, and next month it is hoped to include more in a special feature. We rejoice that the theatre has so obviously gained many new adherents.

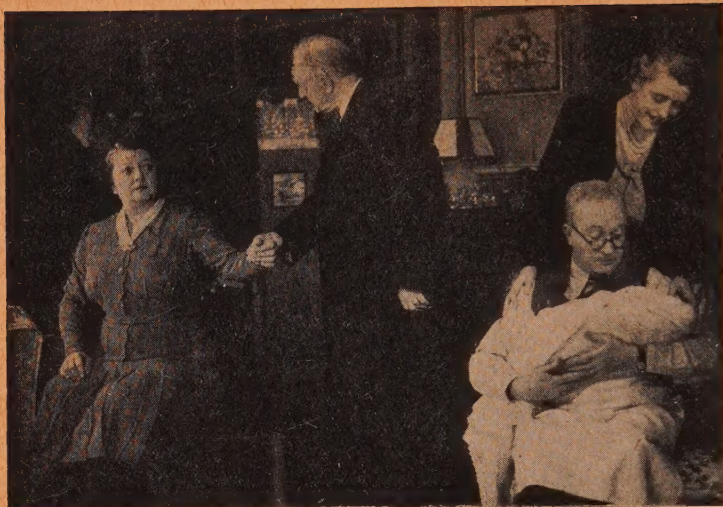
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L-R: Vera Pearce,
Aubrey Mallalieu,
Morland Graham
and Netta Westcott
in an amusing
moment from a
play with many
laughs. *Three's a
Family* is now well
past its 100th per-
formance at the
Saville.

New Shows of the Month

"Dark Lady of the Sonnets"— "Village Wooing"— "Pygmalion"

HAPPIEST of the Shaw productions at the Lyric, Hammersmith, are *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* and *Village Wooing* (first presented on November 28th) and *Pygmalion* (December 12th).

Village Wooing was a particular triumph for Ellen Pollock and Michael Golden, who

as the ambitious village girl with the telephonic voice and the lofty minded writer of "literary" guide books, provided as many laughs as anything in the repertoire so far. Shaw is at his cheekiest and wittiest in this trifle about an attractive designing female who "gets her man." *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* made a satisfying curtain raiser, with Nigel Clarke a boisterous and talkative Shakespeare, Margaret Halstan a Gloriana of warmth and humour, and Patricia Hilliard in dramatic mood as the Dark Lady. The immortal bard is made to utter many Shavian shafts in defence of playwrights and their struggles in "commercial" drama, with a special jibe or two at the English and their elusive national theatre.

Pygmalion needs no introduction. Bookings for this production were unusually heavy, indicating no doubt that a good film sticks in the mind. Michael Golden particularly gives a fine performance as Professor Higgins and Miss Pollock brings spirit and understanding to her effective study of the flower-girl turned lady. Richard Goolden as Doolittle, Margaret Halstan as Mrs. Higgins and John Leather as Freddy are well supported by Patricia Hilliard, Joan Craft, Elaine Inescourt and Nigel Clarke.

Pygmalion is the last announced play of the present repertory and is playing throughout the Christmas and New Year weeks.

F.S.



(Left):

ELLEN POLLOCK

as Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, most successful addition to the Shaw repertory at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

"Blithe Spirit"—

RECORD FOR
STRAIGHT
PLAY

PENELOPE WARD
BERYL MEASOR
and NICHOLAS
PHIPPS in a scene
from *Blithe Spirit* at
the Duchess Theatre.
Noel Coward's farce
has now broken the
record for a straight
play previously held
by *Charley's Aunt*
with 1,466 perform-
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"Another Love Story"

IT did not require the almost unanimous verdict of the critics to confirm my own opinion about this Lonsdale play. For one thing I was forewarned, having some months ago listened to a radio excerpt from the American production. It must be granted, of course, that one can stomach sex inanities on the stage far more easily than through the medium of the air, which somehow seems to magnify the suggestive line and situation. Nevertheless the beautiful stage set, clothes, and high level of the acting were not enough—even with the many witty Lonsdale lines that would keep breaking in—to rescue the piece.

But even if the story had hung together and shown some reason for its existence, we are not in the mood for its cock-eyed view of sex, for its inexplicably drunken butler, or for such a boring group of people, most of whom want to do the "respectable" thing in the nastiest possible way. I should hate to spend a weekend in Mrs. Williams Browne's lovely Long Island home.

A. E. Matthews, as John Asprey, an old hand at the game, who is, however, without morals in a reasonable sort of way, contrives to ease the boredom, but not all the skill of Zena Dare, Roland Culver and Anton Walbrook, nor the undoubted charm of Judy Campbell and Rosalyn Boulter can breathe life into the other cardboard puppets.

All the same, the audience seemed to enjoy itself. F.S.

Opera

"GIANNI SCHICCHI" AND
"IL TABARRO"

THE Sadler's Wells Opera opened on December 5th a seven-weeks' season at the Princes with revivals of two one-act operas by Puccini, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Il*

Tabarro, neither of which has appeared in this company's repertoire for some time.

The first is a tart comedy with a theme, the vulture-like gathering of the needy at the death-bed of a rich relative, immortalised variously in the theatre from *Volpone* to *The Shaughraun*. Puccini's music has an astringent quality that gives an edge to characters and subject, and a certain stridency in the singing did not seem here misplaced. That admirable young bass-baritone, Edmund Donlevy, whose performance of the Marriage Broker in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* is the most brilliant piece of humorous character drawing in current opera, played the amiable trickster, Schicchi, who manages to scoop the best plums in the will for himself, with the elongated nose and sly roguery Donald Wolfitt brought some years ago to the part of Autolycus. An unexpected strain of panegyric for Florence and her art appears in this comedy; it has drawn from Puccini some music more sweetly mellifluous than the rest, and from Morris Kestelman a set of extraordinary beauty in which the rich carving and triptych and sunlit colour of Sienee and early Florentine art are exquisitely realised.

Mr. Kestelman's flair for the mediaeval period, which is also shown in his picturesque décor for the Old Vic production of *Richard III*, is not called upon in *Il Tabarro*, a tragedy of passion set on the Parisian waterfront, for which he has also designed the scenery. This is one of the few operas with a really first-class libretto, as dramatic and penetrating as a story by Balzac. Its people, dockhands, barges and their women, are true people of the working class, drugging their slavery and sordid environs with drink and passion, and brief dangerous flashes of yearning and re-

bellion. Puccini has matched the theme with his finest and most dramatic score apart from that of *Turandot*, music in which the interest is divided equally between the orchestra and voice, and which contains one witty back-reference to *La Bohème*, when the Ballad Seller "blurbs" his sheet copies of Mimi's song. The three principals in the drama, Victoria Sladen as the faithless wife, Tom Williams as the jealous husband, and Arthur Servent as the dockhand lover, sang the music excellently, but a certain placidity in all three performances weakened the full power of the tragedy. This opera needs fine acting as well as fine singing, and only Edith Coates as the rag picker succeeded in both.

It was when ballet shook off the trammels of the fairy tale and four-act construction, and under Diaghileff and Fokine produced programmes of one-act ballets with a variety of themes and characters, that ballet emerged as a living art in which there was complete unity between the component parts of drama, music, dancing and décor. *Il Tabarro* has the same unity and vitality, and it would be interesting to see, if the one-act opera programme were more encouraged, opera would similarly develop as a coherent art and draw into its orbit the best talents in modern music and painting. Sadler's Wells improvements in production are a step in the right direction.

A.W.

LONDON is enjoying a record number of pantomimes and Christmas plays this year. *Goody Two Shoes* (Coliseum), *Babes in the Wood* (His Majesty's), *Cinderella* (Winter Garden), *Peter Pan* (Stoll), *Alice in Wonderland* (Palace), *The Glass Slipper* (St. James's), *Once Upon a Time* (Adelphi) and *Hansel and Gretel* (Princes) have all been produced too late for review this month.

The new Terence Rattigan comedy, *Love in Idle-ness*, which opened at the Lyric on December 20th, with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne starring, will be reviewed in our next issue.

Mr. Bronson Albery, managing director of the New Theatre, where the Old Vic Theatre Company is enjoying such a brilliant success, is inaugurating a scheme to provide bookable seats for members of H.M. and Allied Forces on leave in London.

Owing to heavy bookings for the Old Vic season, service personnel experience great difficulty in obtaining seats when they are suddenly given leave. Mr. Albery is making arrangements whereby approximately 10 per cent. of reserved seats at all prices (and 20 per cent. on Saturday evening), will in future be kept and sold on the day of the performance only to members of His Majesty's and Allied Forces on leave, who make personal application in uniform at the New Theatre.

Any seats not so taken up by members of the Forces by noon for the matinee performance and 3 p.m. for the evening performance, will be disposed of in the usual way to the general public.

This scheme will operate at the New Theatre from January 2nd.

Included in the Christmas programme at the Academy Cinema, with Walt Disney's *Dumbo* and *Tarakanova* (with Annie Vernay and Pierre Richard Willm) is *Message from Canterbury*, an unusual and beautiful film directed by George Hoellering, which tells the story of Canterbury up to the present day in the form of a sermon by the late Dr. William Temple containing his philosophy, faith and hopes for the future of a world at peace.

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Geoffrey: You're a very wonderful woman, Martha, and a darling too.

Martha: I wish that were really true.

Geoffrey: Someday someone will write a real appreciation of mothers in war-time. Then perhaps you'll believe it.

FREDERICK
 LEISTER as
 Geoffery Radcliffe
 FAY COMPTON
 as Martha Dacre.

“No Medals” AT THE VAUDEVILLE

MOST timely is this tribute to the mothers of England who have patiently endured the trials of the war unhonoured and unsung.

Esther McCracken's latest play is another brilliant success for its author, who, among all our present day dramatists, has a happy knack of presenting ordinary English folk and their everyday lives with a note of authenticity and abiding interest.

No Medals, which is the story of Martha Dacre and her family, and of all the big

and little tribulations facing housewives to-day, is noteworthy for the splendid acting of the clever cast, headed by Fay Compton, who gives a moving and sympathetic portrayal of Martha. The play—like life, even in war-time—has many humorous moments, but Esther McCracken has not been afraid to dwell on the strain and anxieties which are the constant lot of women whose menfolk are in the fighting forces.

The play which is presented by Linnit and Dunfee, Ltd., is directed by Richard Bird.



Mrs. Gaye: 'Adn't you better switch 'er off?

Geoffrey, who is rather enjoying himself with the hoover, interviews the prospective char, in the opening scene in the sitting room of Martha's furnished house in a port somewhere in England. Martha Dacre, an attractive widow, who has been bombed out, lives here with her two daughters, both in the Wrens, and Geoffrey Radcliffe, R.N., an old friend of the family, who has been retired and "dug out" again. Martha, weighed down by her multitudinous household and war-time tasks, is desperately in need of some domestic help, and Geoffrey is determined to capture the lugubrious Mrs. Gaye.

Thora Hird as Mrs. Gaye.



Helen: Go on, what's the verdict?

The family, struggling to get breakfast in Martha's absence at the canteen, are delighted to hear of Geoffrey's success with Mrs. Gaye, who has agreed to come three mornings a week.

L. to R.: Pauline Tennant as Lolly Dacre; Ronald Fortt as Nigel Wyland; Michael McNeile as Paul Ffolliott, a casual visitor; Valerie White as Helen Wyland, Martha's elder daughter; and John Witty as Roddy Macintyre, a friend of Lolly.



Helen: We have rather got all our "eggs" in one basket in the old "Benevolent."

Martha, back from the canteen and already busy with the ironing, tries to cheer up her daughter who is worrying about her husband joining his ship, in which Martha's son, Benjie, is also serving.

Martha: Goodbye, my dear boy, come back safely—and soon.

Martha bids a cheerful goodbye to her son-in-law, Nigel, who is joining his ship earlier than expected and is unable to get in touch with Helen before he goes.

(Right of picture: Dorothy Hamilton as Harriet Lessing, Martha's sister.)



Martha: No, Harriet! Not "Old Girl!"

Harriet and Martha are not on the best of terms, which is not surprising as Harriet has a comparatively easy life in her war work, a patronising manner and a nasty habit of asking Martha to do countless odd jobs for her.





Mrs. Maling: Quick! Quick! The fishmonger's got fish!

Phyllis Maling (Robin Coles), a neighbour, rushes in with an exciting piece of information.



Mrs. Maling: They're sending him overseas almost at once.

Martha: Oh, my dear—

Mrs. Maling: I can't think why I wanted him to get promotion now.

Mrs. Maling looks in later much chastened.



Paul: You're a very understanding sort of person.

Paul Ffolliott, an unscrupulous young man, plays on the good nature of Monica Raine (Helen Horsey), the young woman who lives in the flat upstairs.

Helen: Mother—do you hate the idea of being a grandmother?

Martha: No, I like it—most women do. It's the men who object. Though I remember your Uncle Charles saying he didn't mind being a grandfather, but he didn't care much for the idea of being married to a grandmother. Your Aunt Elspeth was furious.

Helen: Well, I'm glad you don't mind. I haven't told Nigel—yet.

Martha: Told? Helen! O'you mean I *am*?—or rather you are?

Helen has the good fortune to be driving her chief to the quayside and hopes to see Nigel, but she wonders whether he will worry when he hears her piece of news.



Martha: Look at your hands and look at mine! I don't have to pick up silk stockings these days, my hands act as magnets.

At last Martha's pent-up feelings get the better of her and she gives her sister a piece of her mind, elaborating at length the innumerable dreary tasks she has to do in the never ending round of washing, mending and ironing, cooking, washing-up and shopping.





Waterman: Now, there's a chap as just don't know the meaning of the word "truth."

Helen, waiting on the quayside, hears some revealing facts of Paul Ffolliott from the Waterman (Alexander Field).

(Right):

Helen: Do you think that all the Great Lovers through the ages have talked such drivel to each other at the last moment?

Nigel: Perhaps they didn't both have jobs to do at the same time.

Helen and Nigel have a few minutes together before he sails.



Lolly: You have a nerve, standing there firing questions at me like a schoolmaster.

Lolly and Roddy have a quarrel about Paul but all ends happily, and they decide to get married.



Martha: That's enough. Don't overdo it. It's worked! How marvellous!

Roddy, in high good spirits, gives Martha a hand in testing the result of her efforts at bottling fruit.



Martha: You would find that a good deal easier if you took it off.

Lolly: There isn't time, besides I think I've sewn it to my foot already.

Lolly on her way out with Roddy makes some rapid first aid repairs to her stocking.

Monica: The people I should like to decorate with a very special medal in this war are the ones who call "Hello!" to you when you are feeling utterly alone.

Monica, whose husband is away fighting, pays tribute to Martha's unfailing kindness.



Geoffrey: Wait, Martha, wait, he is probably safe—we don't know.

Geoffrey breaks the terrible news to Martha that the "Bengvolent" was dive bombed and sunk three hours out. Later, news comes that Benjie at any rate is safe.



Martha: That was unexpected.

Helen: I'm nearly out.

There is still no news of Nigel, and Martha, making a supreme effort to ease her distracted daughter's mind during the vigil, persuades her into playing Demon Patience. As for Martha herself, there is new happiness ahead, for in the midst of this crisis Geoffrey has realised at last that he has loved her for years.



Helen: I suppose this has really been our baptism of fire—for both of us.

The happy ending for Helen when Nigel walks in with nothing worse than a damaged elbow. At last she is able to tell him about the coming baby—the news she could not bring herself to reveal in a tin hat on the quayside! Nigel goes off to hospital, and now reaction sets in and Martha rallies round to minister to her daughter as the curtain falls.

Frederick Ashton's "Nocturne" Revived

by Audrey Williamson

THE transfer of the Sadler's Wells Ballet from the New to the Princes Theatre, with its accommodation for a larger orchestra, made possible the revival, during the last week of the Princes' season, of Frederick Ashton's *Nocturne*, a ballet composed to the music of Delius' "Paris" nocturne and dropped from the repertoire when the company was forced to leave Sadler's Wells Theatre in September, 1940.

Created in 1936, a short while after *Apparitions*, *Nocturne* was one of Ashton's earliest major works for the Wells, and it remains a masterly example of English ballet, a pure dance drama of flashing beauty in the Diaghileff tradition, with more continuity and compactness than *Apparitions* even though there is nothing in it, choreographically, to equal the matchless and dream-haunted Ball Scene of the earlier ballet, still Ashton's most poetic and sustained invention. Historically, *Nocturne* is, perhaps, more important, since here for the first time Ashton composed to concert music more exacting than the essentially dramatic music of Liszt, and created a ballet with human characters set in a period not far distant from our own. The theme, suggested by Edward Sackville-West, a small human tragedy played out against a background of ball and masquerade in a great city by night, has been perfectly realised by the choreographer, who has set his four leading characters, the worldly young man, the rich girl he chooses, the poor girl he rejects, and the compassionate spectator who is moved from his detachment and lifts his arms over the city in a saddened philosophy, against shifting patterns of lifting and whirling dancers which break like waves over the three lovers, submerge, part and throw them together again. The dance moves upwards as well as forwards, the Rich Young Girl makes her entrance in a "lift" of winged ecstasy that carries her across the whole stage into the arms of her lover, a nameless girl kneels, with an impulsive gesture of sympathy, beside the weeping Flower Girl and the corps de ballet is established, not as a mere dancing background, but as a group of human characters. The one weak link in the chain is the solo of the Young Man, a meaningless dance which holds up the action and does nothing to express his character or emotions. Its lack of virility may be in part due to the music, whose sad melodic outline certainly does not call for male dancing at this moment, and the costume, evening dress and "tails," being more



Edward Mandinian

MARGOT FONTEYN and FREDERICK ASHTON in the revival of *Nocturne*.

normally associated in dancing with revue and the music hall, is a difficult one for a solo in a serious ballet. The brief *pas de deux*, dances of swinging lifts and sensuous, intertwining arms, are, as in all Ashton's work, finely inventive and expressive, and his opposition of masqueraders and ball dancers draws an effective choreographic parallel to the musical counterpoint. The nostalgic period atmosphere of Delius' score, with its bitter-sweet woodwind *motif* and sense of a great city sleeping and throbbing to life, the ballet beautifully realises in dance and design, Sophie Fedorovitch's costumes, flowing in line and warm in colour, being breath-takingly lovely, and the night sky and classic simplicity of her setting giving a curious sense of an invisible city below.

The Flower Girl was one of the first parts created by Ashton for Margot Fonteyn, and with dances designed to reveal the charm of her arabesque and to express the mute pain of "desprized love," it remains one of the most fragile and wistful of her portraits. The Rich Young Girl, created by June Brae with sensational success, is now played by Pamela May with a flushed radiance of youthful seductiveness and beauty, and Robert Helpmann, in a more sophisticated portrait than heretofore, does not minimise the purely sensual

(Continued on Page 25)



Cis Farrington: *I may be only fourteen, but I feel like a grown man.*

The precocious youth Cis (Derek Blomfield), the object also of the affections of the maid servant, and a constant source of wonder to his stepfather, Mr. Posket, tells his music teacher Beatie (Dorothy Primrose) that, despite his tender years, he is very much in love and intends to marry her.



Mrs. Posket: *Don't you know that in a four-wheeled cab, the fewer the knees there are, the better.*

Mrs. Posket (Avice Landone) who, with her sister, Charlotte Verrinder (Helen Cherry), is scheming to visit a Colonel Lukyn who is in possession of certain facts regarding her first marriage, tries to mislead her husband Mr. Posket (Denys Blakelock).

Scenes from **'The Magistrate'** at the ST. MARTIN'S



Mr. Posket: *I think I am addressing a lady. It may be acute nervousness on your part, but you are certainly pinching my arm.*

By an unfortunate chain of circumstances Mr. Posket, who has gone for a surreptitious night out with Cis, finds himself in the same private room under the table with Mrs. Posket, completely unaware of her identity. It was here that Mrs. Posket and her sister had come to see Colonel Lukyn when the hotel was raided by the police. Luckily for the respectable magistrate he and Cis manage to escape. (Centre: Newton Blick as Achille Blond (proprietor of the Hotel des Princes), and on sofa, Jonathan Field as Isidore, the waiter.)

PHOTOS BY FELIX H. MAN

SIR Arthur Pinero's glorious farce, *The Magistrate*, opened at the St. Martin's Theatre at the end of November. It is an Arts Theatre Group production, and with the exception of its presentation in their Festival of English comedy, it has not been seen in London since Edward Terry and Fanny Brough played in it in 1892.

Denys Blakelock is in the title rôle as Mr. Posket, the magistrate of Mulberry Street. His adventure with his step-son, Cis Farrington (Derek Blomfield), when

they have a night out together in Victorian London is one of the funniest things to be seen on the London stage. Pinero proves himself a master of farce, with a wife who deceives her husband, and a pseudo-youthful step-son who teaches his father to gamble and bet and involves him in a hotel police raid. Finally, having condoned the committal of two Army officer friends to a "house of correction," the magistrate sentences his wife and sister-in-law to seven days' imprisonment.

Colonel Lukyn : *How dare you like-ladies and gentlemen spend their breathing till they nearly have apoplexy.*

Spector Messiter (Leonard Collopy) has caught his victims by listening to the number of people breathing the room. Mrs. Posket, having given a false identity to the police, swoons during the interrogation.

David Bird as Colonel Lukyn and Bill Shine as Captain Horace Vale.)

(Below) : Sergeant Lugg : *Good morning to you, sir. Regretting liberty I'm taking, sir - I've seen you look more strong and hearty.*

Mr. Posket turns up at the police court next morning very much the worse for wear, having been chased through the streets most of the night. Newton Blick as Sergeant Lugg.)



(Above) : Colonel Lukyn : *Do you know what has happened to me in jail—a soldier, sir an officer? I have been washed by the authorities.* Colonel Lukyn expresses great indignation at being treated like a common felon

(Centre) : Derek Birch as Magistrate Bullamy.)

(Left) : The final scene, when Mr. Posket on discovering his step-son's real age, agrees to his marrying Beatie.



Angela: *Thank God my husband's an artist and I'm not supposed to keep this place clean.*

The Rev. William Paris drops in unexpectedly on the Prouts to ask them if they will be members of the Brains Trust he wants to organise. He finds their bohemian household a little disconcerting.

PICTURES

BY

JOHN WICKERS



Padre: *No, no, I only want a slight modification of the lighting.*

The irrepressible Jessie Killigrew of the A.T.S. takes the stage lighting in hand when the Rev. Paris begins to assemble the Brains Trust.



Padre: *What makes cows in a field run after railway trains?*

The Padre has to repeat the first question to Dr. Macadam who is somewhat hard of hearing, when the oddly assorted Brains Trusters are launched on their perilous session.

Scenes from "It Depends What You

THE new comedy by the brilliant Scottish doctor dramatist, James Bridie, *It Depends What You Mean*, which has been unanimously hailed by the critics, is enjoying a well-deserved success at the Westminster Theatre where it is presented by Robert Donat in association with Merlith Productions.

The unusual title of the play gives some clue to its theme. An Army Padre (Alastair Sim) organises a Brains Trust for the amusement and edification of the Forces in an Army recreation hut in North Britain. With the inimitable Bridie humour we see what happens to private lives when the village wiseacres start answering questions a little too frankly. The leading question—"Is Marriage a good idea?"—is put to the Brains Trust by Private Jessie Killigrew

(Margaret Barton) of the A.T.S., and she insists upon having a truthful answer so that she may make up her mind whether or not to marry her boy friend, Private Walter Geikie (Alec Faversham) of the R.A.S.C. Her question involves some embarrassment for the members of the Brains Trust. In particular, Angela Prout (Angela Baddeley) and her artist husband George Prout (Wilfred Hyde White), whose private lives are made public property.

Other members of the village Brains Trust are Professor James Mutch (Oliver Johnstone); Viscountess Dodd, the local Lady Bountiful (Nuna Davey); Joe Byres, a Scottish Labour M.P. (Walter Roy); and Dr. Hector Macadam, a somewhat deaf doctor (O. B. Clarence).

The play has been produced by Alastair Sim.

George: You see you're not classically beautiful, though you've got interesting features and rather beautiful eyes.

Spurred on by Private Killigrew, the Prouts reenact their first meeting in their attempt to answer by practical demonstration the question "Is Marriage a good idea?", much to the amazement of their companions on the platform. Their effort is greatly aided by the pantomime scenery that still remains on the stage.

Dr. Macadam: I haven't got a sense of humour, myself, I'm too busy.

As time goes on the outspoken doctor, like the Prouts, becomes a painful embarrassment to the harassed Padre.

ean" AT THE WESTMINSTER

Jessie: Did you choose right or didn't you? And if you didn't what was wrong?

So that she can decide whether or not she shall marry her Walter, Jessie Killigrew is determined to know the answer to her question. Try as he may, the Padre Question Master cannot swerve her from her course.





George: Is he your lover, or what?

The whole of the Prouts' private life has been laid bare in spite of the Padre's despairing attempts to get on to another subject, and matters come to a head when George demands to know the relationship between his wife and old school friend, "Puggy" (Professor Mutch), another member of this unique Brains Trust.

(Below):

Walter: *I've seen the time I'd have given the most wonderful judy in the world for a plate of bully and a slice of bread and marge.*

Back at the Prouts' house after the complete disintegration of the session, Jessie's Walter arrives to contribute some homely commonsense to the proceedings, while the Prouts' temperamental outburst proves to be nothing more than a storm in a teacup.



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The Problem of the Prodigy

by
ERIC JOHNS

(Right):

Sir Cedric Hardwicke and his wife, Helena Pickard, help their son, Edward, to learn the lines for his rôle in *The Commandos Strike at Dawn*—his debut, in films.



THE Hardwicks are no exception. Like other successful stars Sir Cedric Hardwicke and his actress wife, Helena Pickard, often find a now rather familiar letter in their mail bag. It is a request from a loving parent, asking for advice about putting children on the stage. Little Pamela has shown an aptitude for toe dancing, and little Peter has recited "The Charge of the Light Brigade" at the end of term concert, so feeling it might be an idea to put them on the stage the parents appeal to the Hardwicks for direction.

In private life the Hardwicks have a similar problem in the person of their own twelve-year-old son, Edward. There is a suggestion that Edward may follow his parents' footsteps on the boards, but when it comes to mapping out the course his father and mother often find themselves almost as perplexed as the anxious parents who write to them about little Pamela and little Peter. However, an insight into their outlook on the matter of taking up the stage as a career might benefit many a fond mother.

They have no intention of putting Edward on the stage simply because they themselves would like to see him become an actor. The desire to go on the stage must be in the child, and not merely in parents desiring to bask in the reflected glory of an artist offspring. Unless the child himself has an urge to be an actor it is useless to take the first step towards getting him on the stage.

If you ask Edward what he is going to be when he grows up he will tell you quite casually, but quite firmly, that he is going to be a comedian, though in the next breath he will probably ask if you have seen the latest fighter-bomber. He is not stage struck, yet he seems to have taken it for granted that he will earn his living in the same manner as his father and mother.

Provided this urge continues the parents will offer no objection to the boy becoming an actor, but they would never have made the first suggestion or swayed the boy into following their profession.

They know only too well of the heart-breaks of the theatre, even for established players. They know that one can never rest on one's laurels, or feel securely "made for life" in the theatre. There is always the next part to think about, and that soul-searing business of having to start life all over again on the day following the last night of a run. If it has been a short run then money, too, may be short; and if it has been a long successful run it will be necessary to choose the next role with the utmost discretion, as so much will be expected of an artist fresh from a much-talked-of personal triumph. The successful new novelist treads the same thorny path when he writes his second book for an eager public, all expecting so much of it. Unless the boy has a strong character, quite apart from any talent for acting, he will break under the nervous strain and constant anxiety of such a life, and it would be folly to consider putting him on the stage.

Edward Hardwicke has never been stage struck, in spite of having met so many theatrical celebrities in his home; but at the outset he realised acting was a very serious business not to be lightly treated. For his first appearance in public he was coached by Doris Stainer, Leslie Howard's sister, in order that he might appear at a charity matinee to present the Duchess of Kent with a purse. While this flaxen-haired mite was waiting to curtsy before Her Royal Highness someone asked him if his father was in front. "No," replied Edward, without hesitation. "He's working, too." Nothing could have pleased his

(Continued overleaf)

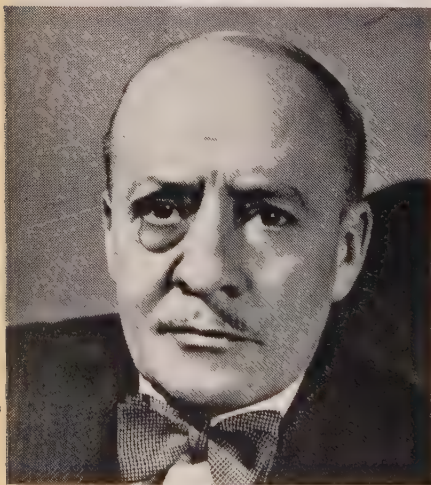
In the News



Alexander Bender

MARGARET LEIGHTON

has scored a great success in the Old Vic repertory season at the New Theatre, playing *Raina in Iwas and the Man*, the *Green Woman in Peer Gunt* and *Queen Elizabeth in Richard III*. She will be seen as *Yelena in Chekhov's Uncle Vanya*, which goes into the bill on Tuesday, January 16th.



John Vickers

HUGH WAKEFIELD

who is playing Ronald Squire's rôle in *While the Sun Shines* at the Globe Theatre. Mr. Squire is having a holiday, and when he returns to the east early in the New Year, Mr. Wakefield will lead a second star company in Terence Rattigan's comedy in the provinces.

The Problem of the Prodigy

(Continued from previous page)

parents more than this positive proof that their son was regarding their profession in the right light, and if he intended to become an actor it was obvious that he would take it seriously at the outset.

They took great care over his speech and pronunciation. In addition, he took dancing lessons, thereby acquiring that ease of movement which is an asset to a man or woman in any walk of life. A man who walks well and speaks well can command attention in any society, even though he may not be gifted with good looks, or have the means to patronise a good tailor. Let a public school man speak, and mark the respect he commands by his voice alone. Voice culture is never wasted on a child, whether he becomes an actor or an artisan.

Edward made a successful professional appearance at the Malvern Festival in 1939, playing stepson to his own mother in a Chinese play, written by the author of *Lady Precious Stream*. About a year after the outbreak of war Edward accompanied his mother to America to join Sir Cedric who was confined to New York and Hollywood by long-term stage and film contracts, and during his stay on American soil he appeared with Roland Young and his mother in a Lonsdale radio sketch broadcast to this country from the Merchant Navy Club in New York City. While in Hollywood, Edward, being a blonde Nordic type, played one of the Norwegian children in the dramatic film *Commandos Strike at Dawn* with his father. Later he was seen with Spencer Tracy in *A Guy Named Joe*; and so far Spencer Tracy is the only artist he has ever hero-worshipped, even though he has learned to swim in Hedy Lamarr's Hollywood pool, and has met as many film stars as most boys of his age have seen on the screen.

There is no fear of Edward losing his head about the stage. It is purely and simply business as far as he is concerned, and he takes the playing of a part just as seriously as the making of model aeroplanes, which occupies most of his leisure hours. There is no uncontrolled excitement about it—it is an all-absorbing task that must be performed as well as humanly possible.

Lady Hardwicke will tell you that she was often guilty of day-dreaming in the schoolroom. Instead of paying attention to her Algebra she was designing Period costumes for her dolls, and after school she would never get home quickly enough to translate her designs into actual fact with a pair of scissors and some suitable material. Edward has not been bitten by the theatre to that extent, but one has to bear in mind that he has spent his youth

(Continued facing page)

in an air-conscious age, devoted to two uncles in the R.A.F., Group Captains Walter and Charles Pickard, the latter being better known as "F. for Freddie" Pickard, who lost his life so gallantly bombing Amiens Gaol to give patriots their freedom. It is small wonder that the boy is so occupied with the modelling of aircraft.

Yet when the aeroplane becomes an instrument of peacetime travel again it may lose a certain hold on his boyish imagination, and we may find young Edward's chisel and fret-saw fashioning a model theatre to present puppet plays, against settings of his own design, painted by himself; and if he happens to have a flair for dabbling in electricity there will be no end to the glory of the lighting effects he can produce.

Edward's parents are not too keen upon his becoming a professional actor before his studies are finished. It is not easy for a boy who has occupied his own dressing room in the theatre, and has become the darling of a company of players to return to school and take an undistinguished place in the classroom once more. Furthermore, one has to consider studies inevitably missed owing to professional engagements.

A boy should have a good normal education, with three or four years at the University if possible before finishing his stage education at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He will then have a good

cultural foundation, and realise the existence of other spheres of life beyond the little cardboard and tinsel world of the theatre. His outlook will be broader and his characterisations on the stage will be richer in consequence, even in his first years.

Edward was deeply impressed by Paul Robeson's Othello, which he saw in New York while waiting for a boat to Lisbon last summer; but normally he prefers a knockabout comedy film, or a humorous programme on the radio—or if it is a quiet afternoon at home he frequently turns to Mark Twain to while away the hours. With luck, we may have a Chair of Drama in our Universities by the time he reaches the age to take a course at Oxford or Cambridge, when it is obvious he will devote most of his time to the study of comedy, an art which always fascinates players, since it is so much more difficult to master than tragedy.

Should Edward finally decide on a stage career, I can conceive Sir Cedric giving a few parting words of advice to the boy before he leaves the house to play his first big part in the West-End. I imagine it will be rather like the advice George Edwardes gave to W. H. Berry on the eve of his forty years of stardom. "You'll find making a name for yourself very like climbing a greasy pole. It's difficult to climb up—more difficult to stay up—but darned easy to slip down."

Sadler's Wells Ballet

(Continued from page 17)

and selfish desire of the Young Man. Ashton himself, on leave from the R.A.F., returned to present a patrician profile to the audience, and give the static rôle of the spectator a positive value of pity and resignation which seems to extend beyond the immediate action to all humanity in all time. The warmth of his reception showed the audience's awareness of how valuable an artist, as well as choreographer, ballet has lost during the past 3½ years.

The quality of this revival was the more welcome since Ashton's choreography had been represented at the Princes only by *Façade*, *Patineurs* and *The Quest*, the last a work with weak patches but much choreography of real brilliance and beauty which, as in all Ashton's ballets, was perfectly moulded to the powers and personalities of the original dancers. It is no reflection on the dancers that Ashton's work is difficult to recast successfully, but recent performances have been very unbalanced, and in fairness to Ashton *The Quest* should be rehearsed and performed more often with the original principals. Performances of *Les Sylphides* also vary very much in quality, and I suggest the policy of "two or three dancers, one part," praised and

advocated by Arnold Haskell in his book "National Ballet," is a good one only if "two or three dancers" of a style and technique truly adequate for the part are available. I should like to see again Moira Shearer's Waltz, with its cool grace and poised extension in arabesque, and dimmer lighting throughout. The highlight of this season's new performances has been Anne Negus' Papillon in *Carnaval*, an exquisitely danced interpretation with something of Kirsova's stylishness and glancing brilliance.

Further performances of Helpmann's *Miracle in the Gorbals* have confirmed first impressions that this is a work of original genius, and a landmark in ballet. The courage of the Sadler's Wells Company in producing it shows the vigorous and progressive outlook of the English National Ballet, and its enthusiastic reception by audiences is an encouraging indication that the public mind is alive to new and dramatic ideas in ballet and not bound to escapism and prettiness. The Wells can now leave England next year confident that they have a healthy and creative national art to show to other nations, and a receptive audience when they return.

Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR
AMERICAN
CORRESPONDENT
E.
MAWBY GREEN



(Left):

Oscar Homolka and Mady Christians in a scene from John van Druten's latest success, *I Remember Mama*, which he adapted from a Kathryn Forbes novel.

Picture by Vandamm Studio

WHEN John van Druten picked up the morning papers after the opening of *The Voice of the Turtle*, he probably wondered what he would have to do to get such glowing notices again. Obviously he has found the solution for now, almost twelve months later, he is back on Broadway with *I Remember Mama*, an adaptation of Kathryn Forbes' novel, *Mama's Bank Account*, which is being acclaimed better than the inexhaustible *Life With Father*, now in its fifth year.

I Remember Mama has no formal plot, but is rather a series of events in the life of a Norwegian-American family living in San Francisco at the turn of the century. There is father, a hard working carpenter; Katrin, the eldest daughter, who wants to be a writer; Dagmar, the youngest, who has a crush on cats and longs to be a veterinarian; and Christine, the most sensible, who wants to be nothing in particular. Nels is the son, and he is to be a doctor. And there are three stuffy aunts, two married and a third still untouched in her forties who wants to remedy this condition by marrying a timid little undertaker. And then there is Uncle Chris, who covers a soft heart by frightening everybody. He

likes his liquor, and loves and lives with a woman who cannot get a divorce to marry him. But most of all there is Mama, the mainstay of the family and the play. It is she who guides the family through its varied crises, taking pride in its successes and giving the strength to conquer its little tragedies. As the child Dagmar says: "Mama can fix anything."

The audience sees this family portrait through the eyes of Katrin, who sits at the side of the stage reading from her notes for the manuscript of *Mama's Bank Account*. As she reads, the story is acted out, and Katrin leaves her desk and takes her place as a member of the family. Three revolving stages have been employed to unfold the countless incidents as they are narrated. To mention a few, there is the hospital where Dagmar had her mastoid operation and Mama scrubbed her way in to the ward in the disguise of a cleaning woman; the ranch where Uncle Chris on his death bed enjoyed his last drink with Mama and his woman; and the fashionable hotel lobby where Mama traded cooking recipes with a famous lady novelist for the literary leads which were to give Katrin her start.

As you can see, Mr. van Druten has

used successfully the movie flashback method for the projecting of his play. He has drawn on this film technique to such an extent that when RKO gets around to doing the screen version practically all the lucky scenarist will have to write will be fade-in fade-out.

Under the playwright's theatrically wise and sensitive direction, the meticulously chosen cast is turning in the finest acting seen on Broadway this season. The young and charming Joan Tetzl is giving her most outstanding performance as Katrin. As the gruff but kind Uncle Chris, Oscar Homolka, is at last able to prove to New York theatregoers what a brilliant and likeable actor he is. But the greatest satisfaction of the production is seeing Mady Christians in her first starring American role. As Mama she is magnificent. She brings to her portrayal all the warmth, honesty and dignity necessary to leave a memorable and glowing impression. So far Miss Christians has not been mentioned in the same breath as Katherine Cornell, Helen Hayes and Ethel Barrymore. While it is true she lacks their "glamour," as an actress she strikes us as being supremely talented and dangerously near their equal. All her portrayals are remarkable for their individuality until it is almost unbelievable that Mama is the same Mady Christians who was so absolutely right as the Queen in Maurice Evans' *Hamlet*, the Lady Percy in *Henry IV*, and more recently the wife of Paul Lukas in *Watch on the Rhine*. All the theatrical tricks she manipulates so skilfully are employed to further the character she is portraying rather than to enhance the personality of Mady Christians.

I Remember Mama could only have been put on by a management with a total disregard for money. Its complicated staging, large cast and many costume changes make it an extremely expensive play to produce and operate. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein are responsible for this superb production, and it is their initial venture in the producing end of show business. Previously they have made their money writing the score and book for many musical comedy hits — at the moment fabulous sums from the fabulous *Oklahoma!* George Jenkins has designed the exciting and mood-fitting settings, and Lucinda Ballard the attractive period costumes which, occasionally seemed a bit too lavish for the state of Mama's bank account.

After slipping with two serious plays last season, *Outrageous Fortune* and *Doctors Disagree*, Rose Franken has turned her talents back to comedy and has scored another box-office success with *Soldier's Wife*. This is a little something Miss Franken has whipped up for the women and the movies. She tells the story of a soldier who returns home with a medical discharge

—home being a modest apartment with wife and new baby—after serving in the Pacific. He finds it difficult making the adjustment to civilian life, for he feels uneasy sitting on the sidelines while his comrades continue the fight. The understanding wife starts cheerfully to see him through this trying period, when Miss Franken helps her out by dropping this topical problem and switching to things more glamorous. It seems the wife's letters to her husband were so human an appeal that he arranged for their publication at the request of a buddy in the hospital who died. Overnight this typical housewife becomes a celebrity with a best seller on her hands. She gets offers from the movies, gets taken to first nights and the Stork Club, cocktails at a famous actress' apartment overlooking the East River, and gowns by Hattie Carnegie. To keep peace with her feminine following, Miss Franken has the wife reject this new life for the more natural one of domesticated mediocrity with home, husband and babies. And so the women leave the theatre, go happily back to their apartments in Brooklyn and The Bronx wanting no part of glamour, and to smile more sweetly upon their husbands.

MGM made a pre-Broadway deal for the movie rights to *Soldier's Wife*, and Miss Franken has provided them with a slick play that should look much better on the screen.

The professional touch that makes this stage presentation Broadway hit material lies not in the story but in the bright dialogue and the extremely competent acting. Miss Franken has the enviable knack of making chit-chat charming, and of hitting upon the humorous traits that are so easily recognizable in one's home existence. There is the baby carriage in the living room, the baby's wash drying on the radiator, the celery sticking out from the shopping bag, etc., etc.

Martha Scott plays the Claudia-like wife with charm and skill, and Myron McCormick looks and acts like the \$6,000 a year chemist he is supposed to be. Glenn Anders and Lily Darvas scintillate as two jaded sophisticates, who "are on the Merry-go-round and don't know where they're going." Frieda Inescort completes the cast. As Miss Scott's recently widowed older sister, she plays with the proper stiff upper lip demanded.

Miss Franken's direction matches her material, and her husband, William Brown Meloney, is serving as producer. Raymond Sovey's setting of a remodelled apartment is admirably suited to the atmosphere of the play.

Another returning soldier is depicted in George Abbott's presentation of *Snafu*, a new comedy by two Hollywood writers, Louis Solomon and Harold Buchman. How-

(Continued on page 31)



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Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

THE lovely heroine of *A Night in Venice*, who sings and acts with rare charm and vivacity, is, I found, a very serious person who takes a keen interest in world events.

This is not so odd, really, for Miss Bayan is Russian, with that kind of international background which makes for tolerance and understanding. Her childhood was spent in China and later she studied singing in Vienna with long visits to Germany and France. Small wonder that she is a linguist.



DARIA BAYAN

English (Miss Bayan speaks it with a delightful accent) was one of her childhood tongues, with Chinese! Daria has five masters, all of whom have mastered more than four languages—two of them, Alexandra, the eldest, and Tamara, no less than seven.

Nothing could have been further from the thoughts of this talented young lady when

she came to England from Austria for a brief holiday in the summer of 1939, than that she would remain here right through the war and find herself, in 1944, leading lady in the West End. Miss Bayan thought herself very lucky to have thus escaped by chance from war-torn Europe, and has grown to love and understand England in these past few years, helped no doubt by her E.N.S.A. tours and other visits to our provincial theatres. It was flattering to hear from one who has lived in many lands that there is a deep and unique maturity about this country which makes her the "China of Europe." And that nowhere in the world are the ordinary people more kindly or better mannered. Miss Bayan has a real affection for London's work-a-day folk—her taxi drivers and 'bus conductors with their unflinching and unquenchable sense of humour. She is trying hard to add Cockney to the other five languages she speaks!

Daria Bayan has a true Russian love of the theatre, which she feels has a great contribution to make to the culture and peace of the world. For this reason nothing less than the best in drama and music is to be tolerated. One could wish that all connected with the English theatre were so motivated.

We shall surely see much more of this intelligent young star. It was after this little talk in her dressing room that I visited and enjoyed *A Night in Venice* with its lovely Strauss melodies and lavish production. I thought that Miss Bayan was enchanting as the little fisher girl—Cinderella who captivates the romantic Duke's heart. She brings to the part the gaiety English stars seem unable to achieve, and a purity of voice that is a delight to hear. And I happened to know that she had scarcely recovered from a severe attack of tonsillitis which unhappily coincided with the re-opening at the Cambridge!

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NOTES AND TOPICS

THE recent annual report of the British Drama League, recording an increase in membership from 4,110 to 5,006, affiliated organisations rising from 3,297 to 3,972, shows such an all-round development in activity that it is not surprising to read that the most consulted department of all, the library, is hard pressed. To-day's conditions with book and play publishing offer none of the easy margins of peacetime; supplies are ruthlessly cut, and inevitably it is the few popular plays which bear the brunt of the demand. To be "out of print" is frequent and reasonable enough to-day, but any librarian is more than justified in lamenting that a difficult position is made worse by books being lost while on loan, not returned punctually, and too short notice given of requirements. Small points, but they mean a lot to that unique institution, the library of the British Drama League, which many readers of THEATRE WORLD at some time have cause to consult.

UNTIL pantomime replaced one of them, there was a contrast in two musicals in London which had not escaped the attention of London operatic societies, judging from the presence at both of some well-known amateurs. They were *The Lilac Domino* at His Majesty's, and *Something in the Air* at the Palace. It was the well-tried contrast of musical quality and personality humour. Even in its somewhat modernised version, *The Lilac Domino* is most obviously the amateurs' choice, for the Palace Theatre's current offering is just nothing without the individual qualities of Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge.

Example of a December bill at the Questors Theatre, Ealing. Entitled *Comedy Contrasts*, chosen for wide contrast in style, period and country of origin:—Chekhov's *The Proposal*, Niggli's *Sunday Costs Five Pesos*, Kreymsbourg's *Lima Beans*, Shakespeare's *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

Miscellaneous Announcements

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BACK NUMBERS of *Theatre World*, March, 1934 (No. 110), April, 1934 (No. 111), June, 1936 (No. 137), Nov., 1941 (No. 202). Best offers. Apply Captain Spencer, London Reception Centre, Honey-pot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex.

WANTED—"Picture Show Annual, 1943," "Life of Garbo," "Stills" from "Cheer, Boys Cheer," and sets 1 and 2 of "Cinema Cavalcade" as issued with "Max Cigarettes." Good prices offered. Write Box Z8.

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Echoes from Broadway (Continued)

ever, this time the soldier is brought back from the Pacific by his parents, for he enlisted without their consent and he is still under age. The bewilderment of the parents in their attitude towards their sixteen year-old boy, who has outgrown his clothes and has been taught a new independence by the Army, offers wide scope for a human comedy with a warm and endearing appeal, but the authors have chosen to write an artificial piece based on contrived incidents. They have cooked up for the boy all kinds of trouble based mainly on the old mistaken identity plot, which from the start contains too many holes to be really convincing, but it must be said that a lot of laughs have been manufactured from the proceedings. The boy is accused among other things of breaking into a girls' dormitory; buying a car with questionable funds; and of being the father of an Australian girl's expected baby. The loudest laugh of the evening comes with the reversal of the usual father and son talk, wherein the boy wises up his father on the matter of things sexual.

The cast is headed by Billy Redfield (a young Eddie Bracken type), as the boy, and Elspeth Eric and Russell Hardie are the parents. Patricia Kirkland, who scored a personal success in last season's short-lived *For Keeps*, does more than can be expected with a badly drawn part of a college reporter.

John Root's fine setting of a living room in a Southern California house is ideally suited to this type of comedy in its simplicity and workability.

For the curious, *Snafu* is an American Army expression meaning situation normal all fouled up (expurgated, of course).

Cheryl Crawford has co-starred Miriam Hopkins and Victor Jory in *The Perfect Marriage*, a bad play by Samson Raphaelson. The author has let himself become involved with the pitfalls of a marriage on its tenth anniversary. According to American divorce records, its a tough year to stay put on the marital bed, and for three long lingering acts Mr. Raphaelson has Miss Hopkins and Mr. Jory talk themselves off, look around for new bedmates, and then talk themselves back on. *The Perfect Marriage* tosses between the uncertainty of being a problem play and a tepid reminder of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*.

Continued overleaf

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Miss Hopkins and Mr. Jory have an impossible time trying to put something into the script, but the glamorous Miss Hopkins gets the better of the deal for she is given the opportunity to put on a stunning fashion show in creations by Valentina, which made some amends with the women. Joyce Van Patten, who was so wonderful as the little girl in *Tomorrow the World*, plays their spoiled nine year-old daughter. It is an unpleasant part, but she makes it very real. The lavish two-in-one setting of a sitting-room and bedroom is by Oliver Smith and Mr. Raphaelson directed.

Before the damaging reviews appeared, *The Perfect Marriage* had a heavy advance sale, due primarily to the popularity of Miss Hopkins, which means its stay on Broadway is insured for a short while.

Six other productions arrived during October, but did not run beyond the three week period necessary for the producer to share in any movie sale. Of these six, H. Clay Blaney's presentation of a murder mystery comedy, *Meet a Body*, by Jane Hinton had an intriguing idea and a more than promising first act. To a mortuary on the lower East side of New York comes a strange visitor and lays down \$10,000 to make elaborate arrangements for a funeral, and then casually announces he expects to be murdered any moment. He is. Unfortunately from then on the play loses its unusualness by drifting into stock murder situations.

In a pre-Broadway movie arrangement, Warner Bros. made a down payment of \$150,000 for *The Visitor*, a dramatization by Kenneth White of the Leane Zugsmith-Carl Randau novel, which was presented by Herman Shumlin. This is a psychological melodrama about a fourteen year-old boy who presumably was drowned, but returns home three years later. The question arises: Is this the same boy or an imposter? The theme is an absorbing one, but it has been shabbily treated in every phase of its production.



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